

BRIGHTON **Little** THEATRE

AUDITION NOTICE

Little Wars

by Steven Carl McCasland

Director: Joseph Bentley

Production dates: Tuesday 24th October 2023 - Saturday 28th October 2023 (including a matinee on Saturday 28th)

Auditions: Sunday 23rd July 2023 at 18:00 at Brighton Little Theatre

Rehearsals: 27th August 2023 - 23rd October 2023 with a break for the previous production. Precise days and times TBC depending on cast availability, but will be four times a week (three weekday evenings and Sunday afternoon/evenings).

A dinner party during the Second World War unites celebrated writers Agatha Christie, Lillian Hellman, Dorothy Parker, Gertrude Stein, and Alice B. Toklas with a mysterious guest in a country house in the French Alps. With copious booze flowing, acid tongued barbs flying, and the threat of global conflict looming, the guests, and the world around them, are close to boiling point. Everyone has a confession. Someone has a secret.

The play begins as Gertrude and Alice are supplying funds to help evacuate Jews from Nazi occupied Europe one by one. As the guests start to arrive, the strength and convictions of these exceptional women start to simmer into a 'little war' resonating with discussions about collective responsibility, individual action or inaction in the face of moral wrongdoing, and the question of whether to stay silent or speak out.

This is a play for seven power-house actresses, and not often do we see so many phenomenal parts for women in one play, and while the play itself is period specific, the themes are timeless. Please note that this play contains some difficult and potentially triggering themes, including fascism, racism, genocide, sexual violence, infidelity, abortion, and self-harm. Although some are merely brief references, some are explored in uncomfortable detail.

Playing ages listed are the ages that these women were on 22nd June 1940 in the hours before France falls to Nazi Germany. The states the American characters grew up in and/or studied in are specified to help if you would like to try working on a more specific accent. Please don't be put off auditioning if the specificity scares you - generalised accents are not a problem for auditions, and we will work on them later if we need to.

BLT actively encourages auditionees from ethnic minority communities and any of the below parts could be played by any race.

You do not have to be a member of the company to audition, but if you are cast you must join.

For more information and audition pieces, please contact Joseph by email jobaho@hotmail.com.

Character	Description	Playing age
Gertrude Stein	The hostess. A lesbian writer with no interest in the conventional. Feisty, imperious, aware of her own brilliance and a committed drinker of scotch that fuels her lethal barbs to the guests, especially Lillian. Also vulnerable, kind, and open-hearted towards Alice, and in the way she offers support and protection for those that need to be cared for. American (California).	65
Alice B. Toklas	Gertrude's lover, secretary, and muse. Art enthusiast and collector. Seemingly the engineer of this gathering. The diplomat and peacemaker, gentle and accommodating. Endlessly romantic about her love for Gertrude, and as committed to supporting those in need. American (California/Washington).	62
Lillian Hellman	A lying, conniving woman who also happens to be a brilliant writer. Blazingly arrogant, and contemptuous towards Gertrude. She enjoys toying with new people, especially Mary until she learns the truth about Muriel. Although as equally appalled as the others at the treatment of Jews in Europe, she is initially unconvinced about the power of the individual to make a difference against such horrific atrocities. American (New York/residual Louisiana).	34
Dorothy Parker	Satirist and author. Playful and sweet-natured. Despite her biting wit, she cowers to Lillian out of respect and fear. Haunted by her past experience of abortion and attempted suicide. American (New York/New Jersey).	47
Agatha Christie	A crime fiction writer. Far too smart for her own good. Infinitely curious with an eye for fine detail, an inquisitive nature bordering on (and sometimes tipping fully into) utter nosiness. She speaks about the breakdown of her first marriage and her famous disappearance. Somewhat out of place as the only British, and only non-Jewish guest, and as such proves to be an endless challenger to the others. British.	49
Mary Buttinger/Muriel Gardiner	A psychiatrist working in the Austrian underground to rescue Jews and dissidents. Fortright and passionate about her mission, but initially keeps details of how she is acquainted with Gertrude and Alice to herself amongst the other guests. The voice of collective responsibility. American (Illinois/Massachusetts).	38

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Bernadette	Gertrude and Alice's maidservant. Reserved and attentive. Her connection to Gertrude and Alice is initially mysterious - conflicting stories intrigue the guests. She adores her hosts with a depth you might not expect from an employee. The eventual revelation of her assault by Nazi soldiers and her rescue by Gertrude and Alice is a turning point for the other guests as they face a living witness of Nazi brutality. German.	22
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